

FRIENDS *of* OURS



by ELIZABETH COLSON



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“THEN GRANNY TOLD BRIDGET FAIRY TALES”

FRIENDS OF OURS

BY

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY

FLORENCE LILEY YOUNG



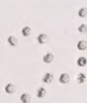
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A SECRET DOOR FLIES OPEN

TWO children were wandering through deep valleys with steep, high mountains of books rising on either hand. They thought it a stupid place with nothing to look at but the backs of books.

“What a big library this is!” said the boy.

“Don’t call it a library; we’ll call it ‘the mountains’ and make believe we are camping in the valley,” said the girl.

“I know a better game than that,” answered the boy. “You look till you find your name on one of these books, and I’ll look for mine. See who can do it first.”

But the boy looked at every book in the row, and every name began with T, so of course he did not find “Billy,” for that was his name.

Billy kept meeting and crowding past his sister, for she too was looking for B. Just

as they were ready to give up, the back of one of the books flew open and out came a Spirit.

“Can I do anything for you?” he asked. “I am the Spirit of this book, the Spirit of Friendliness is my name.”

“No, thank you,” said Billy. “We are waiting for our aunt. Pretty soon she will stop reading and take us home.”

“Perhaps,” said the Spirit of Friendliness, “you would like to hear about some of the good friends in this book while you wait.”

“*Whose* friends?” asked Billy.

“Why, the friends of the people for whom they *did* things,” answered the Spirit.

“What kind of things did they do?” asked Billy.

“Why, my dear boy, the things that make people happy, of course.” The Spirit seemed surprised. “The first story in my book will show you what I mean. It is the story of Bertha.”

“Why, that’s my name!” exclaimed the

little girl. "Open the book and let me see! I looked for it everywhere!"

"I can tell you every story in my book without opening it once," said the Spirit. "To begin with, the word Bertha means dazzling white, and Bertha was a beautiful, friendly queen. She taught her people to spin, and she spun so much for them herself that even when she went riding a distaff or stick with a bunch of flax twisted on it was fastened to the pommel of her saddle, and as she rode along she twisted and twisted the whole bunch into a long thread."

"I suppose there were no machines in those days," said Billy; "that is why they spun all the time."

"And why it was such a help to the people to have the queen work, too," added the Spirit of Friendliness. "But nearly everybody had spinning wheels in their homes. The work went faster with a wheel to help. Bertha did so many good things that her people loved her very much, and although all

this happened eleven hundred years ago and more, they still talk about her, and they have put her in some of their songs. They call the little capes they wear 'Berthas' because they are like those she used to weave. It's very wonderful to have good friends, isn't it?" and the Spirit looked at Billy.

"We haven't any friends," said Billy. "We have just come here to live with our aunt. Our mother and father are in China."

"Oh, I mean the Queen Bertha kind of friends," explained the Spirit. "We could not get away from the people who make us happy even if we lived on a desert island."

"Robinson Crusoe did," said Billy.

"As I remember the story," said the Spirit, "things kept floating to shore that he was very glad to get, and they were things that men had made. There! I thought so," and the Spirit pointed to a handkerchief that was peeping out of Billy's pocket. "Somebody had to spin the flax for that handkerchief, didn't they? You need a handkerchief, don't

you? Wasn't that a friendly thing to do? There may be some friendly person spinning for you at this very minute. I wish I could tell you more about the collection of friends in my book, but——"

"Collection?" said Billy, "I make collections. I collected shells last summer, and now I am collecting stamps."

"Then you could make a list of the friends who do things for you, and you would have another collection, and a big one, too!"

The little door began to close when Billy said: "Before you go, please tell me how to open the back doors of books."

"You cannot find the back doors," said the Spirit; "they are secret. But if you will open the front door of a book and read a bit, you will soon come upon the spirit of it."

Then the door closed, and there was something about the closing of it that made them think of the cuckoo clock in the hall at their grandmother's.

When their aunt came to take them home,

Bertha said, "O Auntie Bess, we have found the friendliest book! It's this one. It's full of stories, may we look at it?" Auntie Bess took it off the shelf and opened it.

"The first story is about a queen with your name, Bertha," she said.

"Yes," said Bertha. "Read it to me."

"I can't read it all to-day, for it is a long story. But there is a song her people sang for many years as they did their spinning:"

WHEEL SONG

"Just as we spin, of old, 'tis said,
Queen Bertha used to twine the thread,
And with our wheel and merry song,
Winter's dark hours fly blithely on.

"When my neighbor comes at night,
With her work, around the light,
Round the blazing fire we gather,
And we sing and spin together.

"Whilst I twist the whistling thread,
The daily task is quickly said;
And then my little, happy boy
Frisks round my wheel in careless joy.

“Oil your wheel, that turning round
It may make no creaking sound;
Oil of friendship is the oil,
Sweetener that, of every toil.”

BRIDGET AND THE BLUE FLOWERS

WHEN Bridget was a little girl she lived in Ireland. She wore a little green and red plaid shawl around her shoulders. Every other day she went to school, and on the days between she went to the flax mill and spun fine thread. She stood all day and worked a treadle with her little bare feet as she twisted the thread with her hands. Bridget wondered why. She could not think how so much fine thread could be used.

When she went home at night and ate her potato with Granny the hens came into the cottage. They hoped that a bit might be dropped for them, or that Bridget would share the skin of her potato with them. Then Granny told Bridget fairy tales while her knitting-needles flashed and clicked. When Bridget climbed the ladder to her little bed in the loft she could hear the swallows talk-

ing together, for their nests were in the loft, too. In summer the wasps buzzed in and out between the cracks.

On Sunday Granny and Bridget always went to the chapel. The windows were made of painted glass, and in each window there was a picture. The window with the picture of the child Jesus and Mary, his mother, was the one that Bridget loved best. When the sun shone through the glass, the painted sky sparkled and the blue of Mary's gown was bright and beautiful. The stone floor was covered with patches of soft colored light.

When Spring came the fields where the flax grew were blue with blossoms. They were as blue as the sky, and much bluer than the ocean. The air was fresh, and the world, as far as Bridget could see, was a beautiful sight.

The air in the mill was filled with dust. The machines hummed and the straps slapped. The straps turned the spinning

wheels, and thread, that had been just bunches of flax a minute before, came spilling off the wheels. There was a child at each wheel to guide the thread and keep it from tangling as other wheels wound it on great spools.

Bridget wanted to run to the blue fields. She looked down the rows of little girls who were working with her and wondered if they did not want to go to the blue fields, too. If only they could all go together!

On one of these spring days, as she stood at her machine, Bridget saw a princess out of Granny's fairy tales coming toward her. No, after all, it was only a little girl, and yet there were silver buckles on her shoes. Bridget stopped treading and her thread snapped. She watched the owner of the mill as he showed the little girl how the spinning was done. Bridget heard him say: "You must see the flax in blossom. I will send a child to show you the fields. Bridget!"

Bridget courtesied. The little girl took

Bridget's hand, and they went out through the factory yard to the road. If Granny had been there she would have asked: "Is it your tongue that is lost entirely?" For Bridget did not say a word. But she looked at the little girl and smiled, and the little girl smiled back.

Soon they could see the blue fields and the little girl cried: "How lovely! What beautiful stuff to work with!"

Bridget was puzzled. "Is it the threads you mean? See, the threads come from the stems," and she pulled out the long silvery fibers. "It is a pity, it is, to spoil so many flowers."

The little girl took a handkerchief with a blue border from her pocket and gave it to her. Bridget had never seen one like it before. It was too small to tie on one's head and far too thin to keep one warm. Bridget felt of it. It was soft and cool.

"Put it in your apron pocket, Bridget, I want you to keep it," said the little girl.

“Somebody must have spun these threads. See, this is the way they go, over and under, over and under, so fine and so close together that you have to look carefully to see them. Now I must go back to the factory. My aunt will be waiting for me. We came from Belfast to see the linen mills, and it’s time that we started back.”

“And is Belfast your home?” asked Bridget.

“No,” said the little girl, “my home is in America. I came across the ocean to visit my aunt.”

The little girl told Bridget the name of the city in which she lived, and her own name, too, and Bridget said them over and over to herself, and did not forget them.

That night Bridget went home to Granny with something pretty to show and a story to tell, and Granny said that it was like a fairy tale. Bridget thought about what the little girl with silver buckles on her shoes had said, and she looked very often at her

tiny blue-bordered handkerchief which the little girl had given her. She could see quite plainly that it was made of fine threads woven together, over and under, over and under, and now she knew what the threads she helped to make were for.

When Sunday came and Bridget went to the chapel with Granny, there was something in the picture she loved best that she had never seen before. The little child Jesus was wrapped in linen, soft and fine and very white.

On the way home after service, Granny looked lovingly at Bridget and asked, "And what was it you were thinking, little one, sitting there so still, with a smile on your lip and a tear in your eye?"

"Sure, I was wishing," said Bridget, "that I had been the child who spun the threads for the frock of the little Jesus."

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"Can you guess who the little girl from America was?" asked Auntie Bess, after she

had finished telling Billy and Bertha the story.

“You!” cried both children.

“Yes,” said Auntie Bess, “and when Bridget grew up she came to America, and brought the little blue-bordered handkerchief with her. She remembered my name, and the name of the city, all that time. She came to see me, and I asked her to come and live with me and she did.”

“You had better put Bridget in your collection of friends, Billy, and all the Irish people who spin for us, too,” said Bertha.

THE CUP VINE

BILLY and Bertha had an uncle who had been around the world. His name was Stephen, and the children called him Uncle Steve. The children were very sorry that he was traveling in far-away countries when they went to live with Auntie Bess, for he told interesting stories and knew how to play a great many good games. However, they loved to read his letters, and the postman brought one from him every week. Sometimes it was for Billy and sometimes it was for Bertha, and very often it was addressed to Auntie Bess, who was Uncle Steve's sister.

One day when Billy was in the kitchen drying dishes as Bridget washed them, Auntie Bess called, "Billy, here's a letter for you from Uncle Steve." Billy came and took the letter in his hand, but before he opened it he said:

“Auntie Bess, I want to tell you right away that while I was drying the cups I broke one of them. It was one of the pink ones. I dropped it and the handle came off and flew under the table. I’m sorry.”

Auntie Bess was sorry, too. The pink cups were very pretty, and they had been brought across the ocean from England when Auntie Bess was a little girl. But there was Uncle Steve’s letter written in England, and they opened it. This is part of what he said:

“Yesterday I went to a factory where cups and saucers are made. I thought of you, Billy, when I saw the boy who made the handles. He had before him on a table little half molds which he filled with moist clay, clapped together, and then jumped on them with all his weight. Not with his feet, but with both hands on the mold, he jumped from the floor and pressed his blouse against his hands. He told me he could mold twelve hundred cup handles in one day. Handle-makers are always boys and for the strangest



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“IT WAS ONE OF THE PINK ONES”

reason. Because a man would look funny jumping every few minutes! Boys, of course, jump all the time, so nothing is thought of it. I wished, as I looked at him, that the time would soon come when all boys could go to school and play and do their jumping out of doors as you do. I told the little handle-maker about you and showed him your picture. I said that you would thank him for making handles for cups, for otherwise you would have burned your fingers very often. He smiled and gave me one of his little molds. 'It's cracked,' he said, 'but it will show him how the handles are shaped.' I have the mold in my pocket and will bring it home to you."

"Isn't that great?" said Billy.

"How strange!" said Auntie Bess, and they both laughed. After that Billy thought of the little handle-maker whenever a pink cup filled with cocoa stood beside his plate.

"Do you know, Auntie Bess," he said one day, "I am almost glad I broke that cup.

If I hadn't, Uncle Steve's letter wouldn't have seemed so wonderful."

All through the winter letters came from Uncle Steve, and then one day when it was spring there came another letter about cups. The letter was written in Egypt and was for Bertha. When she opened it, two flat, smooth seeds fell out. "You read it, please, Auntie Bess," said Bertha, and while Auntie Bess read the letter Bertha listened, holding the seeds in her hand. This is the part that told about the seeds:

"Yesterday I went into a queer little shop. I wanted a rest from the hot, white glare of the sun. The man who kept the shop was a dark-faced Moor. He showed me some cups made of clay, and some melons or squashes called gourds. The gourds had been cut into drinking cups. They take out the seeds and the rind gets very hard as it dries. I felt sure that God had made the gourds so that when men saw them hanging on the vines they would know how to shape their cups

of clay. The cups that grow on vines are much used here. One kind of gourd is called the Shepherd's gourd. It is shaped like a bottle. The shepherds, and many other people who work in the hot sun, carry these gourds hanging from their belts, filled with water. I bought a clay cup which looks like a gourd for you.

“The Moor and I could not say much to each other, so I took your picture out of my pocket. I pointed to it and then to the cup I had just bought. The Moor nodded, and I knew that he understood. A big gunny sack filled with seeds stood under the awning at the door of his little shop. The Moor put some of the seeds in my hand and pointed to them and then to your picture. I said: ‘Thank you,’ in the best way that I could and put the seeds in my pocket, for I knew that he was sending them to you. Now I am putting them into this letter. Plant them and see what happens.”

Bertha put the seeds carefully away.

When they went to spend the summer in the country with their grandmother the children planted them in their own garden patch. The seeds sprouted and grew very fast into vines with big leaves. Big blossoms came, and then the gourds. It was just as Uncle Steve had said in his letter; they were very much like melons. One day when the gourds were turning yellow Uncle Steve came home. He laughed when he saw the gourds hanging on the vines, and showed the children how to turn them into cups. As they cut off the tops and scooped out the seeds Billy said: "We have lots of friends now, haven't we? counting the Moor who sent Bertha the seeds and the boy who jumps on the cup handles."

HAPPY JUNG LU

THERE was once a boy whose name was Jung Lu. Jung Lu means happiness, and Jung Lu was a happy boy. He lived on Muddy River Street in a big city in China. A great many other children lived there, too. Every morning the people pushed the fronts of their shops aside as we open sliding doors. Then Jung Lu could watch the tailor sew and the baker bake. He could watch the idol-maker too, and that was interesting, for he made the gods that the people believed were true. He made idols for the temples and he made the door gods that hung on the outside of every house. The people thought that the door gods kept all sorts of troubles away.

Jung Lu's father and mother made lanterns, and they had to make a great many if they were going to have money enough to

buy rice and little quilted coats for Jung Lu. The lanterns that they made were shaped like flowers and fruits. Some of them were in the shape of dragons and boats and houses. They made the frames of narrow strips of bamboo and covered them with thin China silk or paper, and Jung Lu helped. Sometimes they painted pictures on the lanterns. Some of the people in Muddy River Street made fireworks, and the children worked, too. They braided the fuses of the firecrackers together and pasted red labels on the packages. In some of the houses the people were busy making kites and fans. When the lanterns and fireworks, the kites and fans, were packed in boxes, they were sent across the Pacific Ocean to the United States.

The candy man sometimes came to Muddy River Street. He carried a blue and white china bowl full of something very much like molasses candy before it is hard. The children crowded around him, for even when



“EVEN WHEN THEY HAD NO MONEY FOR CANDY IT WAS
FUN TO WATCH”

they had no money for candy it was fun to watch.

One day when the candy man came Jung Lu had a little brass coin in his hand. He was going to buy candy.

“I want my candy in the shape of a hen,” he said. The candy man dipped a long straw into the bowl and blew through the straw. The soft candy on the end of the straw became a little candy hen.

Another child in the crowd had a brass coin. He said: “I choose to have my candy in the shape of a pig.”

The candy man dipped another straw into the soft candy and blew it into the shape of a pig. He gave the straws to the children with the candy figures on the end, and they ate them as children sometimes eat lollipops.

The children of Muddy River Street played Blind Man's Buff, and ball, and a game they loved named “Cat Catching Mice.” Sometimes the children heard a whistle and a soft tap, tap, tapping. Then they would run, for

they knew that the story-teller was coming. The Chinese story-teller was a blind man. He felt his way by tapping with his bamboo cane, and he blew his whistle to let the people know that he was coming. When the children were gathered around him he told them fairy stories and stories of the Chinese wars. If the fathers and mothers could leave their work they came and listened, too. Everybody loved the stories that the story-teller told.

Not far from Muddy River Street there was a red brick house. It was the only brick house that Jung Lu had ever seen. Some teachers from America lived there. Two of these teachers were the father and mother that Bertha and Billy missed so much. They had gone to China to teach, and Jung Lu loved them dearly.

Billy's father sometimes went to Muddy River Street to tell stories. They were not like the stories that the blind story-teller told. They were about God, our Heavenly

Father, and his love for all the children in the world. Jung Lu listened to every word. When Billy's father walked on, Jung Lu followed, hoping to hear him tell stories again. Once when Billy's father came to Muddy River Street Jung Lu ran and called *his* father to come. They listened to the stories together.

When the American teacher saw how much Jung Lu and his father liked the stories he invited them to come to the brick house. There they heard more stories told. They went very often to the brick house, and then one day Jung Lu's father took the door gods away from the front of their house. The baker and the tailor and the idol-maker all came and asked: "Where are your door gods? You will surely be ill!"

"We are not afraid," said Jung Lu. "We have but one God now, and he is our Heavenly Father."

"He is yours, too," said Jung Lu's father. "If you will go to the brick house where the

American teachers live you will hear about him."

"Shall we go to the brick house?" asked the baker.

"Yes, yes," said the tailor.

"Let us go now," said the idol-maker.

And Jung Lu went with them to show them the way.

Billy and Bertha were spending the summer in the country with Grandfather and Grandmother. Uncle Steve came from the city to help them to celebrate the Fourth of July. He brought a big box with him, and Billy helped him to unpack it. In it were lanterns of different shapes and colors. They hung them on the porch and on the low branches of the big tree near the steps. There were kites and fireworks in that box, too. There was a kite shaped like a bird for Billy, and a kite shaped like a bat for David, who lived next door. When evening came Uncle Steve lighted the lanterns and

they set off the fireworks. Everything that came out of the box that Uncle Steve brought had been made in China.

Bertha ran to her grandmother and said, "Grandma, do you suppose that any of these lanterns were made in Muddy River Street?"

"You will have to tell me about Muddy River Street, Bertha," said Grandmother, "for I never heard of it before."

"Well," said Bertha, "Mother and Father have told us in their letters that there is a street in the city where they live named Muddy River Street. They know a boy who lives there. His name is Jung Lu, and Father says that means happiness. I am sure it makes him happy to go and see Father and Mother. Mother says he loves to go to the brick house. Jung Lu's father and mother make lanterns, and Jung Lu helps. Lots of mothers and fathers and children make lanterns, and kites, and fireworks, too. If we knew who made all these things we

could write and thank them, because we have had such a lovely time."

"It is just possible that Jung Lu helped to make these lanterns," said Grandmother. "If you like, you may send him a message in the letter we are going to write to your mother to-morrow."

"And we can ask Jung Lu to thank the others for us," said Bertha.

FAR-AWAY HELPERS

DAVID lived next door to Billy's grandmother. Billy and David had played together every summer since they were babies, and now David was nine and Billy was eight, going on nine.

It was autumn, and Auntie Bess, and Billy, and Bertha had gone back to the city. Grandfather had promised to let Billy know when the frost had opened the chestnut-burrs, and he was to go to the country again to gather chestnuts with David. Grandfather always kept his promises so the letter came. On a bright frosty day, Billy was met at the railroad station by Uncle Steve.

It was not long before David and Billy were planning to go to the chestnut grove. David thought it would be fun to camp out all night. Billy thought so, too.

When they told Uncle Steve, he asked:

“Do you know where you will camp?”

“Yes,” said David, “just at the far end of the pasture on this side of the chestnut grove. There is a ledge of rock there and a fine place for a fire.”

“Well,” said Uncle Steve, “take some gunny sacks and plenty of matches.” When the boys went to the store to ask for gunny sacks, Mr. Robinson, the grocer, was taking an order. While they waited they counted a dozen of the coarse burlap sacks in a row against the wall; they were filled with potatoes, coffee, walnuts, cabbages, and beans, red, black, and white. When his customer had gone Mr. Robinson brought two of the gunny sacks and showed the boys how to fix a cord so that they could carry the sacks as a postman carries his wallet.

“These sacks will hold all the nuts that you will care to carry home, I guess,” said Mr. Robinson.

“We want a lot of nuts,” said Billy. “I want to send some to my cousins out in Ne-

braska. There are no chestnut trees out there. They go nutting for walnuts and last year they sent me some."

"If I were you, I would send two or three of the nuts in the burrs. Perhaps they have never seen a chestnut-burr," suggested Mr. Robinson.

The boys found that the gunny sacks were large enough to hold raincoats, and bacon, and potatoes, and a great many other things. They reached the place where they meant to camp and stored everything but their gunny sacks under the ledge of rock. Then they went on to the chestnut grove. When they had gathered a great many nuts the woods began to grow more shady. They went to their camping place and built a fire. But their supper was not very good, for they burned the potatoes, and the bacon was slippery and fell into the fire. Then both boys thought it was time to go to sleep, but they kept on throwing sticks on the fire. Every time the wood snapped the boys jumped.

After a long, long time, they heard a pad, pad, padding, and Billy whispered, "Footsteps!" It was only Uncle Steve, for there he stood on the ledge of rock.

"Had supper?" he asked.

"Yes," said David.

"No," said Billy.

Uncle Steve had a gunny sack, too, and he began to take things out of it. He had camped in the Rocky Mountains. He knew how to camp anywhere, for he had been around the world. Very soon the boys were eating chicken sandwiches and a kettle of cocoa was heating over the fire. Uncle Steve had his poncho and some blankets with him.

When the three campers were ready for the night, with the dark blue sky high above them, Uncle Steve asked:

"Boys, are your gunny sacks full of chestnuts?"

"No," said Billy.

"But they sag a little," said David, picking up one of the sacks and dropping it again.



“IT WAS ONLY UNCLE STEVE”

“Those sacks make me think of India. You didn’t know the people of India helped make those sacks for you, did you?” asked Uncle Steve.

“What do they make them of?” asked Billy.

“Jute,” said Uncle Steve.

“What’s jute?” asked David.

“It’s the fiber of a plant like flax. The fiber is much coarser and stronger, though. The plant grows high and has big leaves.”

“How big?” asked Billy.

“Some of the leaves are three feet long. The fibers make such strong bags that quite heavy, valuable things are carried in them.”

“Camping outfits,” said David.

“And chestnuts,” said Billy.

“Although the plant is large it starts small, and there are from fifty to a hundred different kinds of weeds ready to spring up and choke it. The Hindus who work in the jute fields weed patiently for hours and hours.”

“What’s a Hindu?” asked David.

“Well,” said Uncle Steve, “India is a large country and the Hindus are one of the peoples who live there. You can almost always tell a Hindu by the marks on his forehead. They mark their foreheads every morning with a sign that shows what god they worship.”

“Did you see them?” asked David.

“Yes,” said Uncle Steve, “and I saw the little villages where the Hindus who grow the jute live. Their huts are made of mud. There is one well in the village, and every one goes there to draw water. It’s all the water they have. The women go to the well, and if they pass a temple on the way they leave a few flowers or some food for the idol. The idol is their god.”

“Idols can’t eat,” said David.

“They can’t do anything,” said Billy.

“That’s one of the things the teachers go out there to tell them,” said Uncle Steve. “The people in India are afraid of a great many things, just because they do not under-

stand. They are afraid that if they don't take things to the idols they won't have any crops. When the teachers tell them about the Heavenly Father, they are not afraid any more."

"I should say not," said Billy. "It's very different knowing that the Heavenly Father is taking care of you. It must be awful to think you've got to depend on idols that are just wood or stone."

"I wish that you could see some of my boy friends in India weed the jute," said Uncle Steve. "They kneel on little mats and work with their faces toward the wind. Then when they press the plants down to find the weeds the wind helps the plants to rise again."

"They must press the plants away from them," said David.

"Of course," said Billy. "Isn't it funny about the wind? You can see what it does but you can't see *it*."

"That is the way we see the Heavenly

Father," said Uncle Steve. "We see the things that he does."

"I'm glad you told the little Hindu boys about him," said David.

After that they were still enough to have heard a beetle creeping home, if all the beetles had not been at home and asleep already.

THE MEDAL

BILLY and Bertha stood on the curb waiting to cross the avenue on their way to school. It was the first time that they had gone to school without Auntie Bess, and they thought they had never seen so many automobiles before. Every sort of car and wagon whizzed by, and the children waited.

An officer stood in the center of the drive, and as the children watched him he turned a handle in the signal stand. Every car and wagon stopped. Then the children with a great many other people crossed, and Billy said "Everybody seems to mind that officer. I'd like to ask him some questions."

On Sunday morning when the children reached the avenue on their way to Sunday-school there were very few automobiles coming and going.

"Why don't you ask the officer your ques-

tions?" said Bertha. "It's Sunday and he isn't doing much."

Just then the officer beckoned to them, and they went as far as the safety-zone and stopped. Bertha smiled and said to the officer,

"Billy wants to ask you some questions. He always asks questions."

"I'm glad he wants to ask me questions," said the officer. "The more he knows about crossing the avenue the safer he will be. I'm here to take care of you, but if you are careless or do not understand, you may be hurt."

"Everybody minds you, don't they?" asked Billy.

The officer was looking at a car that the driver had left with its back wheels in the safety-zone. "The driver of that car does not mind. He parks his car in the wrong place. The space within these white lines is for people, not cars. Excuse me for a moment."

The officer hauled the car to the place where it should stand because the driver was not there to do it himself. He moved the car quite easily for he was big and strong.

“They should remember that they would be glad to have *their* children safe in this zone,” he said, as he slapped the dust from his gloves.

“That’s like our verse,” said Bertha. “Do unto others as you would that they should do to you. It’s out of the Bible.”

“It’s a mighty good rule,” said the officer.

“How do you make these white lines so straight?” asked Billy.

“They use a lawn tennis court marker for that.” (The officer could answer all of Billy’s questions. It was very interesting to talk with him.) “Painting asphalt is different from painting grass or gravel, so they put a paint brush in the opening from which the paint flows. It paints as the machine moves along. When the rain or the people’s feet wear the white line away, I have it

marked again. In some cities they have raised places in the middle of the broad avenues. They call them isles of safety. People are safe if they stand there. It's like an island in a sea of rushing automobiles. Of course they do something to make the people safe in every city, and here we use white lines."

"The signal stand is big, when you get close to it," said Billy.

"It has to be high enough for everybody to see. The base that supports it weighs fifty pounds. The plate at the top of the pipe is called the target. Now you know that a target is a thing to shoot at, so remember to shoot a glance at it before you start to cross the street." Billy and Bertha laughed.

"I'm glad that 'Stop' and 'Go' are such easy words," said Bertha. "Everybody can read them."

"Not everybody," and the officer shook his head. "People cross this avenue when they

have been in America a very short time, and cannot read a word of our language. I watch for those people and make them as safe as I can."

The officer showed the children the handle in the pipe that held the target, and then he turned it, for he wanted to stop the cars that were coming. Some children were waiting to cross on their way to Sunday-school. Billy said, "Good-morning," and Bertha said, "Thank you," and they went on with the other children.

One day, not long after their talk with the officer, Billy and Bertha stood waiting on the curb. The word on the target was "Go," and automobiles were rushing up and down the avenue. They saw a little gray kitten cross the sidewalk. She jumped off the curb and started to cross the street. She was very small and just the color of the asphalt. An automobile horn blew. The kitten stopped for a moment and went slowly on.

Bertha screamed, "Hurry! Kitty!" and be-

gan to cry. Billy called, "Officer! Officer! Oh, stop them, stop them!"

The poor little frightened kitten seemed afraid to move and kept starting and stopping again. The officer turned the handle and the target said "Stop." When the cars were standing still he picked up the kitten and Billy ran to him and said, "We had to save her."

"Of course," said the officer, "where's your sister?"

Bertha stood on the curb, crying and frightened. The officer and Billy and the kitten went to her, and the cars stood waiting. Even those that were in the greatest hurry had to wait until the children were safely across.

When Sunday came the children started early for Sunday-school, for they had something very important to say to the officer. When he saw them coming he smiled and saluted.

"Officer," said Billy, "I told my teacher

about the day we saved the kitten. She said you were a hero and that you should have a medal. We couldn't get a real medal but I want you to have this button. It has P. A. on it. That means Perfect Attendance. I got it in Sunday-school. But we will pretend that it means Perfect Attention. I wish the button had something on it about being brave."

"Stoop down and let me pin it on," said Bertha. The officer stood very straight after the medal was pinned on his blue coat.

"I am proud of this medal," he said, as he touched the button on the lapel of his coat. "When people ask me about it, I'll say that I won it by obeying the Golden Rule."

"He is one of our very best friends," said Billy as they went down the avenue.

THE PALM TREE VILLAGE

SOME Arab children lived with their fathers and mothers in a little village on the sandy desert. Date-palm trees shaded them from the hot sun. The trees grew because a spring of clear water bubbled up through the sand and watered them. Out in the sun where the sand was dry there were no trees and no children.

It was a pity that the people of that Arab village had no Bible. It would have been wonderful for the children to know how Moses led the children of Israel across their desert. The children of Israel may have pitched their tents and lived for a while around the spring that made the palm trees grow. It must have been hard for them to leave the shade and the cool spring when the pillar of cloud and fire moved on. In the desert wherever a spring overflowed and

watered the sand and trees grew, there was a village like the one I am telling you about.

Great heavy bunches of dates grew on the trees near the top among the leaves. There were no branches or leaves on the tall straight trunks. One of the boys of the Palm Tree Village, whose name was Ishma, helped to gather the dates because he could climb to the top of the tallest tree. When the dates were ripe the men tied a rope around Ishma's body under his arms and around the tree, catching the loop as high as they could throw it over a rough scale-like place on the trunk of the tree where a palm leaf had been. Ishma sprang at the tree and pulling on the rope he walked up the trunk. When he had gone as far as he could with the rope where it was he threw the noose up to catch on another scale. He did this again and again until at last he disappeared among the palm leaves.

Ishma's eyes shone when he saw the sweet, ripe dates. Under the tree four men were



“ISHMA DROPPED GREAT HEAVY BUNCHES OF DATES”

holding a large cloth by the corners. We would have called it a rug. It was made of camel's hair, and woven in strange figures and beautiful colors. Ishma dropped the great heavy bunches of dates into this, for the dates would have broken if he had thrown them on the ground. When the dates were all gathered the people of the village packed the largest and best in coverings made of strips of palm leaves woven together. They were getting them ready to send to America, and so they were careful to choose only very good ones. They laid the dates very evenly side by side, and pressed them close together.

Dates were Ishma's breakfast, dinner, and supper. The little shelters in the village where he lived were made from the wood of palm trees. Ishma made baskets and brushes of the palm leaves. The rope that helped him climb the tall trees was made of strong shreds of the stems of palm leaves.

One day Ishma saw a train of camels traveling across the sandy desert. He ran

quickly and told his father, for he could see that the men on the camels were Arab traders, who stopped at every little palm tree village and bought the dates and the rugs that the Arabs wanted to sell. Ishma's father was glad, for he had dates to sell. The men of the village also brought out their best rugs, and chose the prettiest for the traders. The people of the Arab village did all of the weaving of the rugs with their hands. They made the pretty patterns too, and chose the colors.

While the men got their wares ready, the women made coffee and brought water from the spring, for the traders would be thirsty and dusty. Ishma and his friends ran out from among the palm trees to watch the camels as they came nearer and nearer. Soon they could hear the tinkle of the little brass bells that were tied in the cords that harnessed the camels' heads.

When they reached the shade of the palm trees the camels kneeled. The traders dis-

mounted and bargained with Ishma's father and the other men. They gave them compasses, soap, pocket-knives, and spools of thread for the rugs and dates. These were things that the Arabs were very glad to have, for there were no stores except those that were miles and miles away.

The traders drank coffee and rested in the shade of the trees until the sun went down and it was cooler; then they fastened the great packs of dates to the saddles and laid the rugs across the backs of the camels.

The camels knelt while the traders mounted; then the camels pitched forward and were on their knees. Forward, and back again, and the camels were on their feet, and the Arab traders were high in the air.

The camels' feet made no noise in the soft sand as they walked away; the tinkle of little brass bells grew fainter and fainter. Ishma and his friends ran out from under the palm trees and watched the camels until they were out of sight. It was very still, for in that

country of hot sun and yellow sand there are no birds to sing nor even a breeze to whisper.

All that night the traders rode their camels on their way to the sea where ships were waiting to bring the dates and rugs to America.

One chilly night Billy and Bertha had sweet sticky dates for supper. Before they went to bed they cuddled down on the rug before the fire, and asked Auntie Bess to tell them a story. The rug came from over the sea, and the story that she told was the one that you have just read.

A CHRISTMAS PARTY

MARIE and her grown-up sister and their grandmother kept a baker's shop near the post-office, and a row of fat, sweet cooky dolls in the store window invited every one who passed to come in and buy. Besides cooky dolls Julie sold cakes all sticky and sweet, and jelly almost as clear as glass. There were loaves of sweet, crusty bread a yard long, too.

Behind the shop there was a big kitchen, where Julie and her grandmother made the good things and where Marie helped. The family came to America from their home in France when Marie was a baby. Marie and Julie were often lonely now, because their father had gone back to France to be a soldier. Their mother had gone too, to nurse the wounded soldiers. Marie and Julie were glad that they could help, by taking good

care of Grandmother and the shop, until their mother and father came back to them.

On the day before Christmas Marie's friends Billy and Bertha arrived, in a heavy snow-storm, to spend the holidays with their grandmother and grandfather. That night as it was growing dark the children came through the deep snow to the little shop. They wanted to see Marie and Julie and to buy a cooky doll to put in their Uncle Steve's sock.

The shop was full of people. They talked about the company which they expected, and everybody wished everybody a happy Christmas. When they had gone Marie said, "Julie, what a happy Christmas Billy and Bertha will have! Their Uncle Steve is there, too, you know."

"Yes," said Julie, "their Uncle Steve came this afternoon and bought cooky dolls to put in their stockings."

As Julie closed the door for the night she said, "Everybody is having company. If

only we could have a guest to-morrow! Perhaps some one who is lonesome will come to us. I would like to make somebody happy for the sake of the dear Christ-child."

"Julie!" said Marie, "do you truly think that some one may come? I know! To-morrow we will have dinner ready for five people. Then I will watch at the window and invite the first two people who look lonely to come in!"

Julie laughed. "It's a lovely plan," she said, "and perhaps we can make it come true."

The next day Marie stood looking at the Christmas dinner table. "It's almost ready, isn't it, Julie?" she said. "Now I will go and watch for the guests."

As Marie sat in the front window she knitted and wondered what her mother and father were doing so far away. The muffler that Marie was knitting was nearly finished. She had been patient enough to make it long and wide. It was made of gray wool,

and some day it would keep a soldier warm. Before she had knitted across once, she saw a man passing by. A long red scarf was wound around the man's neck and up over his mouth, but Marie could tell by looking at his eyes that he was kind. He looked hungrily at the goodies in the window.

"Julie! here he is!" called Marie.

Julie came and opened the door. "Will you come in and have dinner with us?" she said.

"You are very kind," said the man with the scarf. "I thought I was not going to have any Christmas dinner." He was soon sitting by the kitchen stove, and when Marie went back to the window a soldier was standing on the walk reading the sign over the door.

Marie opened the door and the soldier asked, "Is the store open to-day?"

"No," said Marie, "but come in for dinner is ready."

Soon they were at the table and the man

with the red scarf said, "I hope that the deep snow will not keep the children from the festival at the church to-night. I brought the tree all the way in my sleigh. When I got to the station, up in the woods, they told me that the snow had stopped the trains. I drove right down, for I wasn't going to disappoint all those children. I left the tree at the church, and my horses are having their dinner at the stable. I was looking for something to eat when Marie called me."

"I am so glad we are to have our tree!" said Marie.

"I meant that you should," said the Christmas-tree man.

"I was on my way home," said the soldier, "but the train was stopped by the snow. I was hungry, so I started off to see what I could find, and here I am. I have been fighting in France but I was hurt, so they sent me home."

Marie and Julie knew that whoever fought for America, fought for France, too. They

thanked him again and again. Marie ran and got her knitting. She finished her muffler while they talked about the war. Then she took it over to the soldier and wound it about his neck.

“For France and America,” she said.

“Thank you,” said the soldier, and he told her of his own little girl.

As it began to grow dark in Julie’s kitchen Billy’s Uncle Steve came to say, “Billy and David and I have shoveled the snow from your sidewalk, Julie. My! but it was deep! But the snowplows are out, and the trains are running. Bertha asked me to say that we would stop for you and Marie to-night on our way to the festival. The tree has come and it’s a beauty!”

“Perhaps I can get home on Christmas day, after all,” said the soldier.

“I will take you to the station at once,” said the Christmas-tree man.

Soon the sleigh was at the door, the soldier put on his new muffler, the Christmas-tree



“I BROUGHT THE TREE ALL THE WAY IN MY SLEIGH”

man picked up the reins. "Good-by," he said, "and a thousand thanks, for you have made Christmas very happy for me."

"Good-by," said the soldier, "and thank you for your kindness and for every stitch in Marie's muffler."

"Good-by," "Good-by," "Good-by," said Marie and Julie and Grandmother, and they waved to them until the sleigh turned the corner.

As they went to the festival that night Marie told Billy and Bertha about their guests.

"I wish *we* had thought to do that, Uncle Steve," said Billy.

"Billy is making a collection of friends," explained Bertha.

"But," said Marie, "they are your friends, too, Billy, you know. The soldier fought for you just as much as he did for us, and the Christmas-tree man said he wasn't going to have all those children disappointed, and that means you and Bertha."

The tree was very beautiful, and the children thought of the soldier as they sang,

“And on earth peace and good-will to men.”

THE RANGER

A TRAIN rushed through a great forest, and Billy, who was traveling with Uncle Steve, complained: "Just trees! trees! on both sides of the car. I can't see anything!"

"Why!" said Uncle Steve, "I can; I can see doors, and chairs, and boats, and books, and log fires, and matches. I can see nutting crooks and sleds and——"

"Oh!" said Billy, "you mean the wood in the trees."

"Yes; those things are still in the trees and some day we will want them very much."

Then in a flash the train was out of the shady woods and into sunshine. Billy could see a high mountain.

"Look! Uncle Steve," he shouted. "There is a man standing on the very top of that mountain. I think he is looking through field glasses. Did you see him?"

“Yes,” said Uncle Steve. “He is a forest ranger. He is watching for forest fires. A spark from our engine might start one. Lean back and rest while I tell you a story.”

“Once a fisherman went into the woods very early. He knew of a mountain stream which had trout in it. It was a summer morning and the forest was sweet and cool. The sun came up and woke the birds. The leaves on the big strong trees were as fresh as the flowers and mushrooms. Squirrels and rabbits lived in the forest. Foxes and wild-cats lived there, too. The fisherman lighted his pipe. He threw the match on the ground and walked on. He did not look back, and after a while he found the stream and fished for trout.

“The little spark in the head of the match did not go out. It grew and crept about among the pine needles. A little breeze found it and made it blaze up. The low branches of a tree caught fire. The fire flew from tree to tree. Up, up it went nearly as high as the

clouds; the air quivered and was full of smoke. The squirrels and rabbits, the foxes, and wildcats came out of their homes and ran and hopped. The foxes forgot that they wanted to eat the rabbits, and the squirrels forgot that they were afraid of the foxes. They all ran, and leaped, and rushed together, with fire! fire! chasing them, and coming nearer and nearer.

“The men in a town near the forest saw the smoke and flames against the sky. They got their shovels and their pails, and started. It took them a long time to get there and the fire burned on and on. The men filled their pails with water from the stream. They could not put the fire out in that way. Their pails were too small and the stream was not deep. They threw away their pails and went to work digging a trench. They worked hard and fast. Their shovels flew. When the fire reached the trench it stopped spreading. When the sun went down the birds and animals were gone, so were the leaves and flow-

ers. Even the great strong trees were gone except for a black trunk here and there, without a branch or twig. The men were tired. One of them said: 'Some of these trees had been growing for a hundred years.'

"Another said: 'Think of the houses, the barns, the boats, and the fences that were burned in these trees!' It made them very sad to look at the burnt place."

"Is that the end of the story?" asked Billy.

"No," said Uncle Steve. "That is only the first part of the story. Lightning sometimes struck a tree and started a fire; again sparks from the engines of trains lighted the dry pine cones. Boys camped out all night and went home the next day without being sure that their fires were out.

"The people said: 'We must not let our beautiful forests burn. The children all need wood, and when they grow up they will want it even more than they do now.' So men were sent to the tops of mountains to watch for fires. They were called forest rangers, and

the man you saw looking through field glasses is one of them."

"I am glad I looked just at the right minute. I might not have seen him at all," said Billy. "What do they do, Uncle Steve, if their mountains are not high enough so they can see all around?"

"They build towers of rough poles," said Uncle Steve. "They fasten a ladder to one side and put a platform on the top. Then they climb up into their towers and look around. The rangers sometimes see a fire fifty miles away. On their horses they ride and ride for miles through the forest.

"As soon as a ranger sees a curl of smoke among the trees he telephones. He tells the people on the farms and in the towns that are nearest the fire, just where it is. The men saddle their horses and start instantly for the fire. They do not take their pails and shovels. They know that here and there, through the forest, they will see big tool-

chests, built against the trees. The men ride as far as they can; when they come to a trail that is narrow and tangled they leave the horses and hurry on, on foot, looking for the tool-chests as they go. The tool-chest is just where the ranger told them they would find it."

"I am going to watch for a tool-chest while you finish the story," said Billy.

"Do!" said Uncle Steve. "When the men find the tool-chest, they open it and take out axes, hoes, and shovels. Then they crash on, through the bushes and the brush, and put the fire out before it has had time to spread very far. Before the rangers began to take care of the forests the fires spread until they came to towns and cities. Then the towns and cities burned, too."

"We live near a forest, and our house is made of wood," said Billy.

"Yes," said Uncle Steve, "but the ranger is watching. He is one of God's helpers and we are safe. And the boat we are going to

build some day is safe, too, hidden away in some tree.”

“And the birds’-nests, and the places where the squirrels and rabbits live,” said Billy.

THE QUEEN'S TREE

WHEN Billy and Bertha wanted to buy chocolate they went to Miss Duffy's little shop. Miss Duffy kept books, dolls, rubber balls, and many other interesting things for sale, but the children nearly always said, after looking about, "Chocolate, if you please, Miss Duffy."

As Miss Duffy opened the glass case and brought out the little cakes of chocolate covered with tin-foil, she always asked, "Do you like chocolate?"

"Yes, we do!" the children always answered. They knew that she would say next, "Why, so does the Queen!"

If the Queen liked chocolate she had all she wanted, of course. Probably there was no bank on the nursery shelf, in the palace, waiting to be filled with unspent pennies. Miss Duffy came from England, and she was

thinking of Queen Victoria. But the children thought of the Queen in their fairy book.

The children knew that chocolate grew on trees in the far-away lands. Once as Bertha bit into her brown, oblong cake she said,

“Billy, let’s wonder if this chocolate came from the Queen’s tree.” So they imagined stories about the Queen’s tree until the chocolate was gone.

One day in the spring the children were invited to spend the afternoon with their Sunday-school teacher. She had been traveling in the lands where it is always summer. She had brought home a gift for every child in the class. For Bertha there was a drinking-cup made from a gourd. Somebody in that far-away place had made it very beautiful for her by carving a picture of a camel and palm trees on its round sides.

Bertha thought that the gourd cup was more wonderful than the basket that was given to Billy, although the basket was made of strips of palm leaves woven together. It



“DO YOU LIKE CHOCOLATE?”

was filled with chocolates, and when Billy opened it, the teacher said: "I do wish that you children had all been with me on the day that I saw the chocolate trees. Cacao trees is their real name. Do you know that it takes a great many very careful people to make one little basket of chocolates? The work begins before the chocolate trees are an inch high. I saw some dear little brown children seated on the ground, tearing palm leaves into strips, and weaving the strips into big coarse mats. Then I saw that the mats were used to shade the new little chocolate trees, or they would have withered and died in that hot sun. They told me that the little trees would not bear chocolate beans for six years, and yet all that time they have to be cared for. They must be shaded from the hottest sun, and sheltered from the strongest winds. Sometimes no rain falls and then they have to be watered. I always think of the brown children who weave the mats when I eat chocolate."

“I will too, after this,” said Billy, “for of course, if the sun dried up the little trees, there wouldn’t be any chocolate.”

“Then there are the people who gather the great pods that hold the chocolate beans. They have to be very careful to do it just right, because if they do not know how or are careless they may hurt the tree and then no pods will grow.”

“How big are the pods?” asked Billy.

“They are as big as melons, and they grow on the trunks of the trees as well as on the branches,” said their teacher. “You know how the seeds in a melon are covered with juicy pulp. The chocolate seeds are, too, and that has to be dried off. The people put the seeds in big trays, and rake them about in the sun, so that all will get a chance to dry. And all this is just a beginning. The little brown children who make the mats, and their fathers and mothers, are just a few of the people who help. There are people in France and Switzerland, and in our own country, too, working

every day, to make the chocolate sweet and ready for us to eat.”

“And somebody wraps it in tin-foil, and somebody ties it with ribbons,” said Bertha.

The teacher showed the children a photograph which she took on the day that she saw the chocolate trees. Billy and Bertha looked at it for a long time and found it very interesting. In the picture there was a shelter covered with rough mats made from loosely woven palm leaves shading rows and rows of little plants. Shiny brown children were weaving mats to shade the next little plants that appeared above the ground. In the back of the picture there was a tree. Great pods as big as melons were growing from the trunk and from the branches. It was a chocolate tree.

Bertha pointed to the tree and said, “Billy, that may be *our* tree! I mean the Queen’s tree, and yours and mine.”

That night they told Auntie Bess about the brown children, and Billy said, “We didn’t

count up nearly all of the people who help with the chocolate. There are all of the crew on the ship that brings the chocolate from the hot country where it grows, and an express-man brings it to the store,—and there's Miss Duffy, too."

"I wonder if the Queen knows as much about chocolate as we do?" said Bertha.

THE FLAG-MAKER

ONE day in the fall, when the yellow leaves were so thick on the park paths that a child could scuff through them, a squirrel sat on a bench. Beside him sat a man, and they both liked the warm noonday sunshine.

Billy walked across the park on his way home to lunch, and when he saw the squirrel and the man he stopped to see what they were talking about.

When Billy stopped the man moved to the end of the bench to make room for him to sit there, too. So did the squirrel. The little fat fellow looked so funny stepping sideways to make room for Billy that the man and Billy laughed. Then they were friends, and Billy sat down.

“I just stopped to say a few words to this fellow on my way to work,” said the man.

“I’m just going home from school,” said Billy. “I’m in 2B. That’s my school with the flag flying, the other side of the park.”

“That’s a fine flag on your school,” said the man. “I’m a flag-maker and I know.”

“You are?” exclaimed Billy.

“Yes,” the man said. “I generally sew on the stars. It is nice work. I mean by that, that it has to be done exactly. Each star must have five fine sharp points you know. I’ve sewed thousands of stars on hundreds of blue fields, and each star has been counted and placed and sewed as perfectly as I could do it. Sometimes they put me at binding the hoists.”

“What’s a hoist?” asked Billy.

“The hoist is the end of the flag that lies next the staff. That’s where the greatest strain comes. It’s got to be so strong that the biggest wind you ever knew can’t tear it away. The binding is of stiff, strong canvas. Then comes the work of attaching the lines and toggles by which the flag is to be made

fast to the halyard. When I was a little fellow like you, I used to say that I would work for my country when I grew up. I thought of being an admiral on a battleship. But somehow I've had no time to do much about getting to be an admiral because I've been so busy making one of the finest flags afloat."

"It's *the* finest flag," said Billy. "No flag ever flies above it."

"Now there, you are not just right," said the flag-maker.

Billy jumped up, and the squirrel scuttled away. Billy straightened his shoulders and shouted—"What?" He was angry and surprised.

"I agree with you that the American flag is grand, and we can't treat it with too much respect. Nothing but the Bible should ever be placed on it, and everybody should stand and hats should come off when the flag goes by. But, all the same, there is another beautiful flag that sometimes flies above it, and

I will say that it has a perfect right to be there."

"I'll ask my grandfather about that," said Billy. "He is a minister and he knows about everything."

"Do," said the flag-maker. He looked at his big silver watch. A whistle blew. "Good day, Captain," and the flag-maker saluted Billy and went to work.

Billy was glad to find that his grandfather had come to lunch with Auntie Bess, for he wanted to ask about that other flag.

"Oh, Grandpa," he said, "a man told me that there is a flag that has a right to fly above the red, white and blue. There isn't, is there?"

"Yes, there is," said his grandfather. "When you were a very little boy you used to salute the American flag and say, 'I give my heart and my hand to God and my country.' The man you talked with meant the flag of God's kingdom. It is hoisted above the stars and stripes, for the same reason that

you used to say 'God' before you said 'my country.' You are an American but first you are God's boy. The flag tells that a church service is being held aboard ship. It's a white flag with a blue cross. If you see it, you must salute it, for it is your flag, just as truly as the American flag is yours. Who was the man you talked with about this?"

"He is a flag-maker," said Billy. "He said he knew how to make the hoist end so strong that the biggest wind could not tear it."

"He is doing something very fine for us," said Billy's grandfather. "He works day after day so that we may see the red, white, and blue very often, and are reminded to be good, brave, and true."

The next day, when Billy crossed the park he was glad to find the flag-maker on the bench in the sun.

"Any news about a flag that sometimes flies above the stars and stripes?" he asked.

"Yes," said Billy, "you were right."

The flag-maker bowed. He took from his

pocket a small square of blue bunting with a white star in the center.

"I hoped that we would meet again, so I made this for you," he said. "It's a sort of service flag you see."

"Oh, thanks," said Billy heartily. "I'll hang this in my room. But I can't really serve you know, for I'm a good deal under weight."

"That doesn't matter," said the flag-maker, "you are not a bit too small to serve under both flags. Ask your grandfather. He is an officer under the blue cross, you know, and he knows about everything."

A whistle blew. The flag-maker looked at his big silver watch. "That whistle means that it is time to go to work," he said. "You ask your grandfather to bring you to the flag factory some day, then I can show you how flags are made, and you will see that a great many people are serving their country as I am."

"May my sister Bertha come to the fac-



“IT’S A SORT OF SERVICE FLAG, YOU SEE”

tory, too? She is a very good American," said Billy.

"Yes, indeed. I know that all the friends there would be glad to see her."

Then Billy and the flag-maker shook hands and parted.

BIRTHDAY CANDLELIGHT

WHEN Auntie Bess asked Bertha what she wanted to do on her birthday, she said, "I would like to have a picnic." Auntie Bess looked doubtful, because Bertha's birthday came in January.

"A winter picnic, Auntie Bess," said Bertha, "right here by the fire."

So, when the day came, although it brought a blizzard, there was no talk of putting the picnic off until the next clear day, as we do in summer, and when it began to grow dark it was time to get ready. Billy put a log on the fire and Bertha closed the curtains. Icy snowflakes tapped at the window, and the wind groaned as it blew down the street between the tall buildings. The children waited in the firelight for the picnic supper, and were very cozy.

Soon Auntie Bess came with a cloth for the tea-table, but Bertha insisted that people never

used tea-tables at picnics, and when Bridget came in with the tea-tray she put it on the floor saying, "Did anybody ever see the like?"

There were good things on that tray, but the best of all was the birthday cake that Bridget had made. It was dazzling white, and there were seven little candles in a ring, with a B in silver candies in the center, and the candles lighted not only the silver B and the pretty cake, but the faces of the three who sat upon the rug around the tray.

As they ate sandwiches and drank cocoa Bertha said, "I'll tell you what will be fun. Let's play we are visiting the friends the things on this tray came from, and make each other guess."

"All right," said Billy, "I'm visiting my friends in California, I don't believe you can go any farther than that, not on *this* tea-tray!"

"Raisins," guessed Bertha, "I saw California on the box the raisins came in. That's

how I knew. Aren't the friends who sent us the chocolate far away, too, Auntie Bess?"

"Yes, in the East Indies. The nutmeg in the birthday cake came from them, too. Now I am in Ireland," said Auntie Bess.

"The napkins!" said both children.

"We know that, because we know about Bridget, and the other children—and all the grown-up people in the linen mills. You told us and so did Bridget," said Bertha.

Then Auntie Bess said that she was visiting the Italians. The children could not guess, so she told them about the silver mines, and about the Italians who made the silver into such pretty spoons.

"The spoons on the tray came from Italy," she said, "I'm sure it takes as many people to make them as it took to make the napkins."

"Miners first," said Billy, "and last of all, the man who put the letters on after the spoons are bought, and lots and lots of people in between."

“Just think how far these things came!” Auntie Bess said. “Some came in ships and some in trains, packed in boxes, barrels, and crates, all coming, coming together to make a birthday picnic for Bertha on a snowy night.”

After a while Bertha asked, “How many people does it take to run a steamboat?”

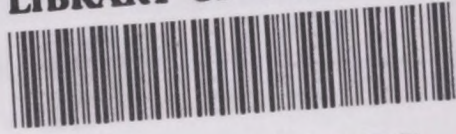
“A whole crew, of course,” said Billy, “and somebody has to pack the things before they start. We couldn’t have even one little raisin unless about fifty people did something about it. Now let’s cut the cake.”

But before Bertha could cut her dazzling white cake she had to make a wish and blow out the candles. She thought for a while and then she said,

“I wish for everybody who helped to make my birthday picnic so pretty and so good, a great many happy birthdays.”

Then, puff! and all seven of the candles went out at once.

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